GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:368
ANSWERED ON:27.07.2010
PARTHENIUM WEEDS
Saroj Shri Tufani

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether large scale cultivable land in the country is affected due to parthenium weeds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has any plan for rooting out parthenium weeds;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether parthenium weeds cause various diseases in human being;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government for weeding out the same?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a) & (b): Out of the total cultivable and arable land about 14.25 million hectare land has been estimated to be infested severely with the rampant growth of parthenium weed. However, with manual weeding and using herbicides, farmers are able to cultivate crops in these areas too but with low productivity.

(c), (d) & (g): Research efforts have been made at Directorate of Weed Science Research, Jabalpur to develop technologies to mass rear Zygogramma Bicolorata throughout the year to use it as an effective antidote against pernicious parthenium weed. Technologies have also been developed to overcome the limitations of this bioagent to make it more effective against parthenium. The Government has adopted following measures for controlling this weed: (i) Uprooting the plants before flowering and burning the uprooted plants or using them for compost making; (ii) Application of prescribed herbicides in non-cropped situations. (iii) Application of recommended herbicides at 30-35 days after sowing in crops like wheat, sugarcane, maize, sorghum, etc.(iv) Distribution of the insect Zygogramma bicolorata against parthenium weed, especially in non-cropped areas. (v) To make people aware of the ill effects of parthenium weed and its management. Parthenium Weed Awareness Week is observed during 6-12 September every year.

(e) & (f): Parthenium weed may cause allergy, skin diseases and asthma in humans. It reduces the availability of fodder for livestock in pastures and is toxic when ingested.